

Montgomery County Commission on Veterans Affairs Meeting Summary Minutes November 16, 2010

I. Call to Order & Introductions: Bill Gray, Chair, welcomed everyone to the meeting of the Commission on Veterans Affairs (CVA). Bill asked for all present to please stand for a moment of silence for all of those who have given their lives and those who have been wounded for our country in the different conflicts in which our country has been engaged in and to remain standing for the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. Approval of Minutes: Roland Kauffman, Commissioner, made an edit to the October Meeting Summary Minutes noting that Bill Gray, Chair, appointed him as part of the subcommittee to discuss the possibility of having a Veterans Court in Montgomery County. Rich Fales, Commissioner, moved to approve the October Meeting Summary Minutes. Carl Bedell, Commissioner, seconded the motion. A vote was taken and the October Meeting Summary Minutes were unanimously approved with the edits. Approved minutes will be online at www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cva.

III. Chair Report

Bill Gray gave an update on the Veterans Day Celebration held on November 11th, 2010 in Silver Spring. The dedication of Veterans Plaza was attended by over 200 people. Greg Hamilton did a great job of putting the program together. Commissioner Jane McCarthy was a featured speaker and gave a presentation in the afternoon about her service as an Army Nurse during Vietnam. Betsy Luecking, Staff, suggested having Jane speak at a future Commission meeting. Jerry Godwin, Vice-Chair, is trying to obtain a copy of the coverage of the dedication filmed by NBC on DVD.

Jackie Ogg, Commissioner, inquired about inviting patients, their families, and staff from Walter Reed Army Medical Center (WRAMC) to the Veterans Day Celebration next year. Bill said WRAMC needs 30 days advance notice of an event. The Commission will invite them to our Memorial Day celebration.

Bill appointed Pete Esker, Commissioner, as Chair of the Veterans Day Planning Committee. Pete noted that next year will be very special as it will be 12 years since the initial memorial was discussed. The memorial contract was signed off by the County on November 8th, 2010, with a completion date of November 8th, 2011. The memorial will be etched glass inscribed with scenes of the Revolutionary War to the present with LED lights all the way around. The panels will be 8 ft by 12 ft. Pete will arrange for the Commission to have a briefing before the unveiling. Commissioners that would like to assist Pete with the planning can contact him at pesker2@comcast.net.

Bill and Roland Kauffman, Commissioner, visited the Jessup Correctional Institute (JCI) for their Veterans Day celebration on Wednesday, November 10th. Roland Kauffman also visited the Maryland Correctional Institute in Hagerstown on Monday, November 8th.

County Executive Isiah Leggett sent a letter of thanks to Bill for the letter from the Commission commending Housing Opportunities Commission (HOC) regarding their award of 25 Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) Vouchers. Congressman Van Hollen helped to spearhead this initiative.

The Commission received three proclamations on Veterans Day – from Governor O'Malley, from the General Assembly, and from County Executive Isiah Leggett. It was suggested that the proclamations be hung in the Silver Spring Civic Building. Jerry presented Bill with a certificate of appreciation from County Executive Leggett.

IV. Update on Veterans Collaborative ~ Rich Schiffauer, Commissioner

Rich noted that Veterans Affairs (VA) is now seeking to install the equipment reserved for Montgomery County's tele-mental health initiative at Charlotte Hall Veterans Home instead. He has spoken with Secretary Chow on how to strategize against this temporary setback. Ann Humphrey, Rep. of Congressman Van Hollen, will let Congressman Van Hollen know about this recent development. She indicated that there is a new Community-Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) being created in Southern Maryland.

The Collaborative is currently drafting a grant proposal for the VA's Homeless Providers Grant and Per Diem Program, which is offered annually (as funding permits) by the Department of Veterans Affairs Health Care for Homeless Veterans (HCHV) Programs to fund community agencies providing services to homeless Veterans.

The Collaborative has had several new organizations join recently, including Jayne Fitzgerald of Operation Military Kids, University of Maryland; Steve Simon, VIP Program, Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce; and Yvonne Brock, Behavioral Health Program for Veterans, Adventist Health Services. Jane McCarthy is scheduled to be on the next Cost of Freedom Panel Discussion Series, which will focus on women veterans.

Rich asked for assistance in organizing and maintaining the library displays that are present in the Rockville Memorial Library during May for Memorial Day and November for Veterans Day. The Commission is now legally able to accept donations. Betsy will partner with Rich with this task.

V. Election of Officers – Nominating Committee Slate of Officers ~ Presented by Commissioner Rich Fales

Bill Gray, Chair, asked for the slate of officers to be presented for appointment. Rich Fales, Commissioner, had previously been appointed Chair of the Nominating Committee. On behalf of the nominating committee, Rich placed into nomination the slate of Bill Gray to continue his role as Chair and Jerry Godwin to continue his role as Vice-Chair. No other nominations were taken from the floor. Pete motioned to approve the slate of officers. Jane McCarthy, Commissioner, seconded the motion. A vote was taken and the slate of officers was elected as nominated.

VII. Roundtable: None.

Adjournment: 7:00pm

Meeting was followed by **Special Presentation** – <u>A Conversation with Everett Alvarez</u>, <u>Jr.</u>

Informative discussion with Everett Alvarez, Jr. the second longest-held POW - Prisoner of War - in American history, spending over eight years in captivity in North Vietnam

Next Full Commission Meeting:

Tuesday, December 21st, 2010, from 6:00pm to 7:30pm at 401 Hungerford Drive, Rockville, MD in the 1st Floor Tan Conference Room.

Respectively submitted, Carly Clem, OSC Betsy Luecking, Staff Liaison